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DEPARTMENT FOR OPS CENTER

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP, OES/UHB, MED

DEPARTMENT FOR CA/OSC/ACS/NESCA - E.STOTT

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON CASE OF H1N1 CONFIRMED IN DHAHRAN, SAUDI ARABIA

REF: DHAHRAN 0124

¶1. The local and national Saudi press reported a new case of H1N1 confirmed in Dhahran in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia (refetel). The "Saudi Gazette" reported in its September 8, 2009 edition that it is the second case of H1N1 in the kingdom and the first of a Saudi national to contract the disease. The newspaper stated that the first confirmed case was reported last Wednesday, June 1, 2009 when a Filipina nurse tested positive several days after returning to Saudi Arabia from a holiday in the Philippines.

¶2. Newspaper reports did not give details about the new case relating to the U.S. Consulate. They did, however, give the flight numbers the infected man had flown on Sunday, June 5, 2009 (Saudi Arabian Flight 032 from Washington and domestic Saudi Arabian Flight 1108 from Jeddah to Dammam) and "appealed" to passengers on both flights to contact Jeddah Health Affairs as soon as possible.

¶3. The doctor leading the team that visited the Consular Section waiting room yesterday on June 7, 2009 returned today. One out of the three Consular Section employees who provided swab samples yesterday tested positive for the Influenza A virus; the test results on the other two were negative. All three employees tested were prescribed, provided, and advised to begin a ten-day regimen of Tamiflu by the doctor.

¶4. Consular Chief in Dhahran called the family home of the infected visa applicant the morning of June 8, 2009. The phone was answered by applicant's brother who stated that he had just arrived from the airport. He was on a flight from Washington he had previously scheduled before his brother's incident. The brother stated he had just graduated from American University in Washington (Masters degree) and had returned home with his wife, daughter, and mother who attended the graduation ceremony. He acknowledged that they had heard about his brother's incident prior to leaving Washington and revealed his young daughter had been seen in an emergency room two days prior to leaving Washington for flu-like symptoms.

¶5. Consular Chief told the brother to pass along the Consulate's best wishes for a speedy recovery and gave him a phone number to call, asking him to let us know when he was released, so we could schedule him for another visa appointment at his convenience. The brother, who spoke perfect, non-accented English, thanked the Consulate profusely for our gestures to his family.

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